

# From the Sources

A sound art installation created by Mel Mercier to commemorate the Fleischmann centenary

**8 June – 24 October 2010**

**Lewis Glucksman Gallery  
University College Cork  
[www.glucksman.org](http://www.glucksman.org)**

## **Project Partners**

Lewis Glucksman Gallery, University College Cork  
School of Music, University College Cork  
Cork Film Centre  
Sulán Studios

**Curator** Matt Packer  
**Film Editor** Chris Hurley  
**Music Advisor** Matt Cranitch  
**Music Producer** Mary Hickson  
**Sound Engineer** Tadgh Kelleher



## From The Sources

In 2010, Ireland celebrates the centenary of the birth of Aloys Fleischmann\*. In summer 2010, as part of those celebrations, the Lewis Glucksman Gallery, UCC, will present an ambitious new work *From the Sources*, created by composer and UCC lecturer, Mel Mercier\*. Based on Fleischmann's *Sources of Irish Traditional Music\**, *From the Sources* will feature filmed performances by almost 100 traditional musicians - all UCC graduates, tutors and students - of the first 986 dance tunes and airs contained in Fleischmann's monumental work.

Some 20 hours of footage, capturing almost 1000 performances, on all the traditional instruments, will be edited for six simultaneous projections in the Glucksman's upper gallery to create a John Cage-like audio-visual installation. In addition to the sound art installation created by Mercier for the gallery spaces, an archive of all the recorded performances will be available for public consultation during the exhibition run.

Taking the compositions of Turlough O'Carolan as a watershed in the history of Irish music, *From the Sources* will re-animate the pre-modern Irish musical soundscape encoded in the more than 100 music manuscripts published up to that time. Beginning with the first tune in Fleischmann's collection, 'The Hay', and ending with 'Planxty by Carolan', *From the Sources* will create an echo of that soundscape in the Glucksman Gallery, and open the treasure house of Fleischmann's collection to generations of musicians, listeners and scholars in Ireland and throughout the Irish music world.

There will be a special programme of live performances, talks, curatorial tours and musical gatherings programmed during the exhibition run.

This exhibition was supported by a Cork City Council Fleischmann Centenary grant and the DEIS scheme of the Arts Council of Ireland

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### **\*Mel Mercier**

Mel Mercier is Head of the School of Music, University College Cork where he lectures on Irish, African, Indian and Indonesian music and directs the UCC Javanese gamelan. As a bodhrán and bones player he is best known for his collaboration over twenty-five years with pianist and composer, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin. Throughout the 1980s he performed extensively in Europe and the USA with John Cage and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. As a composer he works regularly with theatre director Deborah Warner and actor Fiona Shaw, most recently on *Mother Courage and Happy Days* at the National Theatre, London. Other recent compositions include *Fleischmann in Java* (2010) and *The Beauty Queen of Affane* (2009).

### **\*Aloys Fleischmann**

One of the most influential figures in Irish musical life in the twentieth century, Aloys Fleischmann held the Chair of Music at UCC for 46 years, from 1934 to 1980. Born in 1910 in Munich, Fleischmann died in Cork on 21 July 1992. Through his dynamic cultural activism, Fleischmann made a remarkable contribution to the development of the arts in Ireland, especially music. In addition to his work as an educator, academic and composer, Fleischmann founded the Cork Symphony Orchestra in 1934 and conducted it for 56 years; he co-founded the Cork Ballet Company in 1947, and, in 1956, he founded the Cork International Choral Festival and went on to direct it for 33 years. As a teacher, conductor and academic, he has influenced several generations of Irish musicians and music educators.

### **\*Sources of Irish Traditional Music c. 1600—1855**

One of Fleischmann's most significant contributions to Irish music is his monumental *Sources of Irish Traditional Music c. 1600—1855*, a collection of some 6000 Irish song airs and dance tunes compiled from hundreds of music manuscript sources. The mammoth project of cataloguing the written sources began in the 1950s and occupied the Professor right up until his death in 1992. The *Sources of Irish Traditional Music* was published posthumously in 1998. In the Preface to the book, Assistant Editor, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin describes Fleischmann as a cartographer who has mapped the course of Irish music over three centuries, and the publication, itself, as 'a treasure house of information for future research and performance. Fleischmann, too, hoped that the airs and tunes collected in his book, some of which have been lost to the living tradition, would, someday, be re-animated by traditional musicians.